



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
Milwaukee County
CHRIS ABELE • COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele Announces Budget Vetoes

Abele Budget Holds the Line on Property Taxes and Calls for Removal of Estabrook Dam

MILWAUKEE – In an effort to work collaboratively with Supervisors and move forward with a budget that rewards County workers while investing in needed priorities like transit, mental health, public safety, and economic development, Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele today announced that he would veto just two of the County Board’s 66 amendments to his 2016 Budget.

The county executive is proud to support a number of the Board’s amendments that have improved the budget, such as the creation of an Office on African American Affairs to address racial and ethnic disparities that harm families and communities within Milwaukee County and a community identification program to benefit residents who lack the basic identification required to fully participate in society.

“The budget I am returning to the County Board shows we have much common ground. Together we agree on expanding employment opportunities, eliminating inequalities, investing in our workforce, ending chronic homelessness, shifting to community-based programs to improve access and outcomes, supporting our parks and recreational resources, and ensuring the County’s long-term fiscal sustainability,” County Executive Abele said.

Earlier this month, the county executive wrote the County Board to request that they require transparency, accountability, and the use of evidence-based practices with the addition of funds to the Sheriff’s budget. Absent that accountability and a real commitment from the Sheriff to participate in constructive ways to address serious public safety and criminal justice issues in our community, Abele is vetoing the addition of \$4,000,000 to the Sheriff’s budget. Instead of partnering with the County Board, the county executive, and others on the Community Justice Council to ensure a fair and effective justice system, the Sheriff has repeatedly used his platform to make extreme and divisive comments, such as referring to people in the Black Lives Matter movement as “sub-human creeps.”

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“I am vetoing this amendment because I will not raise property taxes by 1.4% to validate the Sheriff for his repeated incendiary comments and his out of touch view on criminal justice and our society,” Abele said. “If we are going to add resources to the Sheriff’s budget it must be as part of a meaningful discussion on reforming our criminal justice system and reducing racial disparities.”

The county executive is also vetoing an amendment adding \$750,000 for a fish passage to the Estabrook Dam and is urging the Board to take the further step of authorizing the demolition of the dam itself.

Removing the dam is estimated to cost \$1.7 million, much of which can be funded through grants and other non-tax-levy sources. Repairing the dam will require a capital investment of \$2.3 million including interest costs on financing bonds, plus at least another \$1.1 million for a fish passage. It will then will require \$160,000 annually to operate, along with an unknown amount to operate the fish passage, in today’s dollars.

“Removal of the dam is the best and most effective fish passage, and it is also the most environmentally friendly and fiscally responsible option,” Abele said. “The City of Milwaukee, the Village of Shorewood, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, and hundreds of Glendale residents have all supported removal of the dam, as has the County Board previously. I ask that the Board sustain this veto and support the demolition of the Estabrook Dam so we can instead invest these funds into our Parks system and critical natural resources.”

The County Executive’s budget veto statement can be viewed [here](#).

The County Executive’s budget non-veto statements can be viewed [here](#).

The 2016 Budget strike-through document can be viewed [here](#).